

Characteristics of Older Adults Experiencing Unaffordable Housing Costs and Food Insecurity

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Background

- Research has shown that food insecurity is higher among low-income, minority, functionally impaired, and socially isolated older adults.¹
- Food insecurity is associated with fair or poor self-reported physical and mental health in older adults.²
- Disadvantages in housing and food are associated with poor health status among older adults.³

Research Questions

- What are the characteristics of older adults age 65+ who, in the past 12 months, experienced food insecurity and unaffordable housing?
- What are the implications of the findings for outreach and service delivery to this vulnerable population?

Data Source and Methods

- The data for this presentation were collected in 2008 through a representative, community-based telephone survey of over 10,000 households, including 2,329 adults age 65 and over, in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties of PA.
- Through PHMC's Community Health Data Base, periodic surveys of the population in this region have been conducted since 1983.

Data Source and Methods

- Respondents were asked:
 - “In the past 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there was not enough money in the budget for food?”
 - “Overall, how difficult was it for you to afford your housing costs during the past year. Very difficult, somewhat difficult, not very difficult, or not difficult at all?”

Data Source and Methods

- In this sample, there were 81 older adults age 65+ with food insecurity and unaffordable housing costs.
- Survey data were weighted to adjust for sampling bias and projected to population totals in the region. When weighted to the population, this sample represents 17,800 adults age 65+ in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Findings

- Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics
- Health and Functional Status
- Nutritional Status
- Housing Status

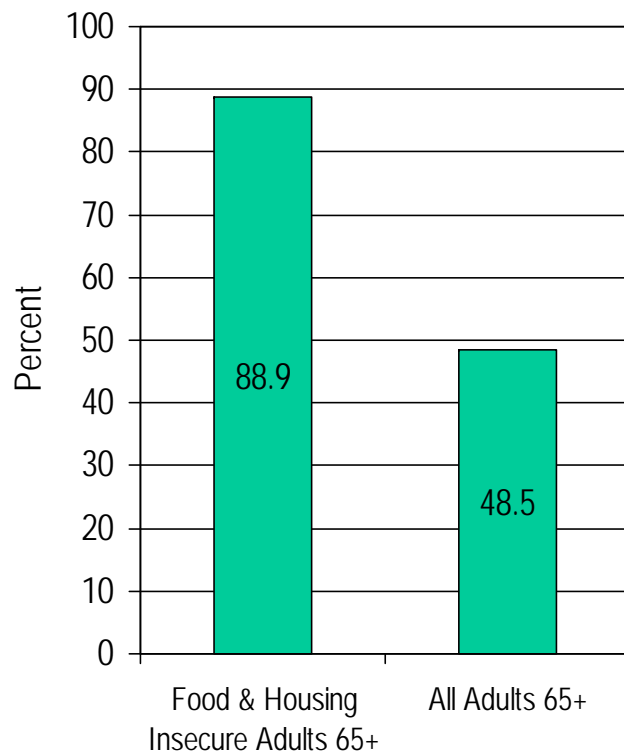
Findings

- 4.0% of older adults 65+ in SEPA cut the size of a meal or skipped a meal in the past 12 months, or 21,000 older adults
- More than one-third (36.8%) of older adults 65+ find it very or somewhat difficult to afford their housing costs; this represents 185,000 older adults
- The overwhelming majority of older adults who cut out a meal (84.8%) also had difficulty affording housing in the past year. This represents 17,800 older adults, or 3.4% of the total adult population 65+ (523,441) with food insecurity and housing disadvantages.

Source: PHMC Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, 2008 (n=81).

Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics

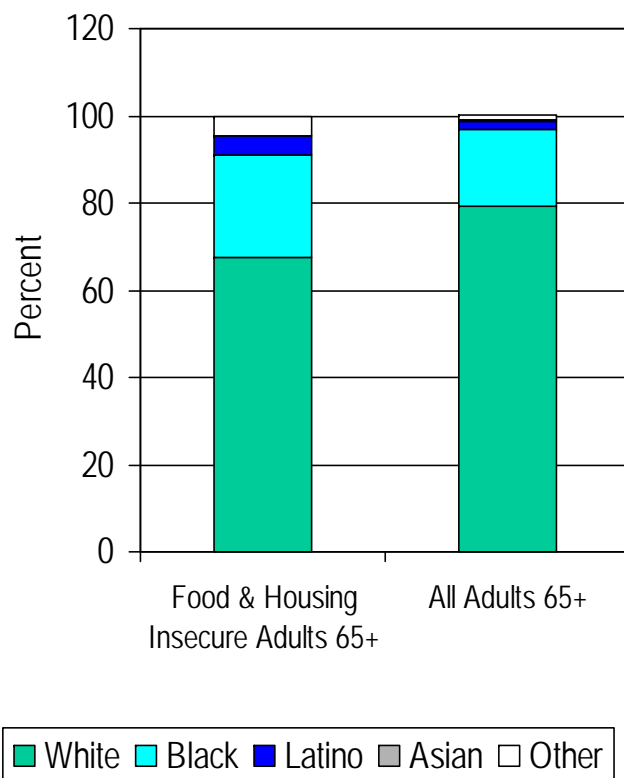
Age Distribution of Food & Housing Insecure Adults and All Adults 65+



- The overwhelming majority of older adults who cut a meal due to cost and have difficulty with housing costs are age 65-74 (88.9%).

Source: PHMC Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, 2008 (n=81).

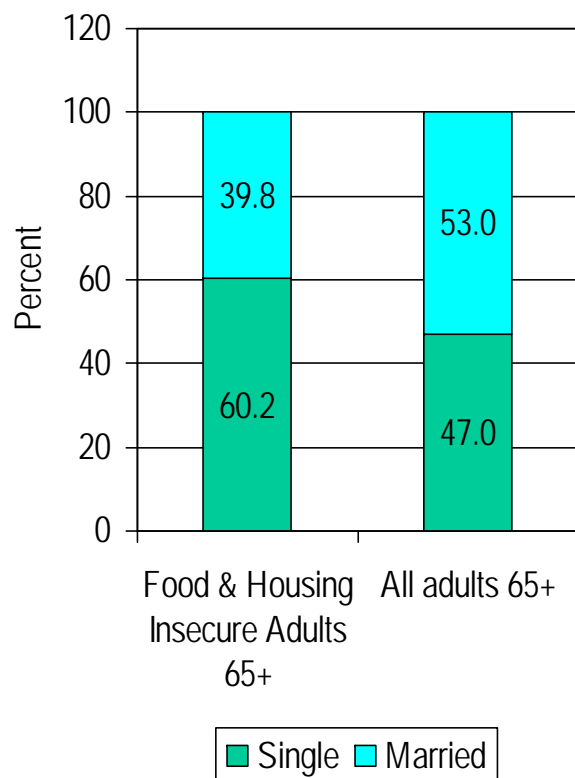
Race and Ethnicity of Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



- The majority of older adults with food and housing insecurity (67.6%) are White.
- However, older adults with food and housing insecurity are significantly more likely to be Black (23.4%) or Latino (4.3%) than all older adults (17.5% and 1.8%, respectively)

Source: PHMC Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, 2008 (n=81).

Marital Status of Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



- The majority of older adults with food and housing insecurity (60.2%) are not married or living with a partner.
- They are significantly more likely to be single (60.2%) than all older adults (47.0%).

Source: PHMC Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, 2008 (n=81).

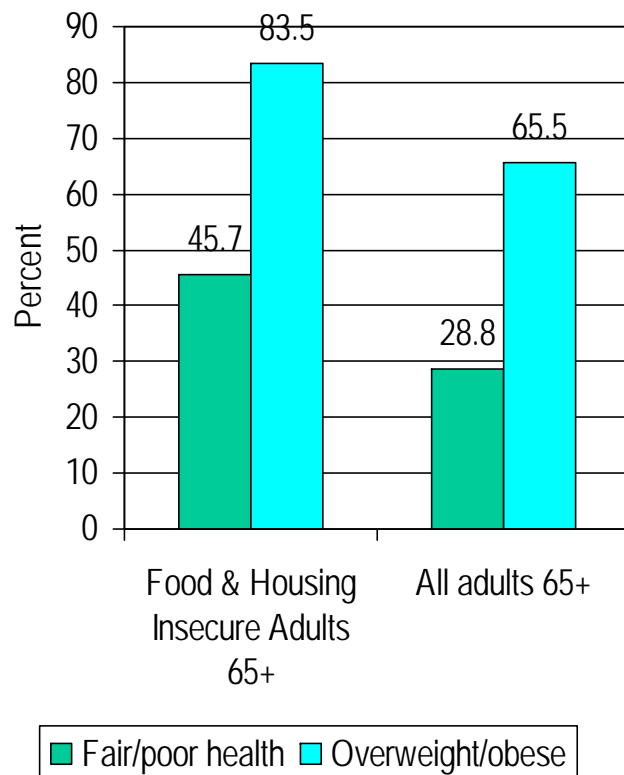


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Health and Functional Status

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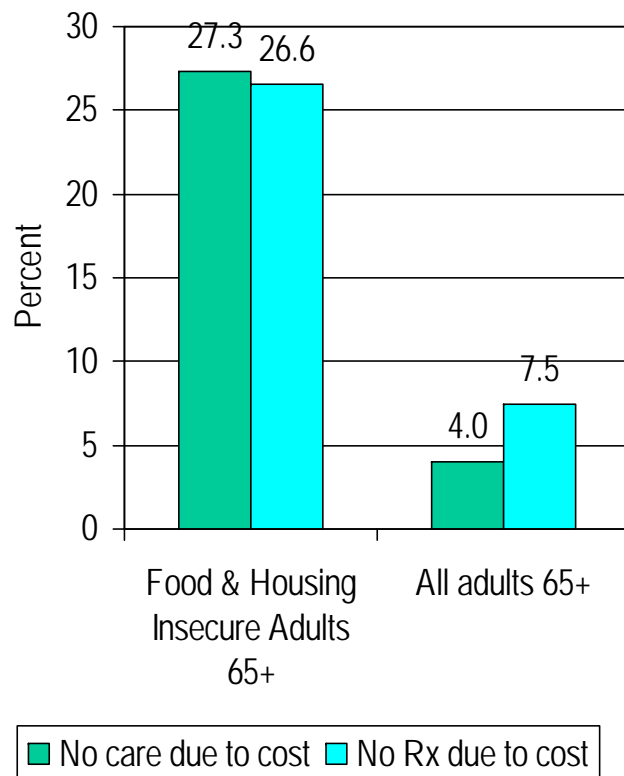
Health Status of Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



- More than two in five older adults with food and housing insecurity are in fair/poor health (45.7%).
- The overwhelming majority (83.5%) are overweight/obese.

Source: PHMC Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, 2008 (n=81).

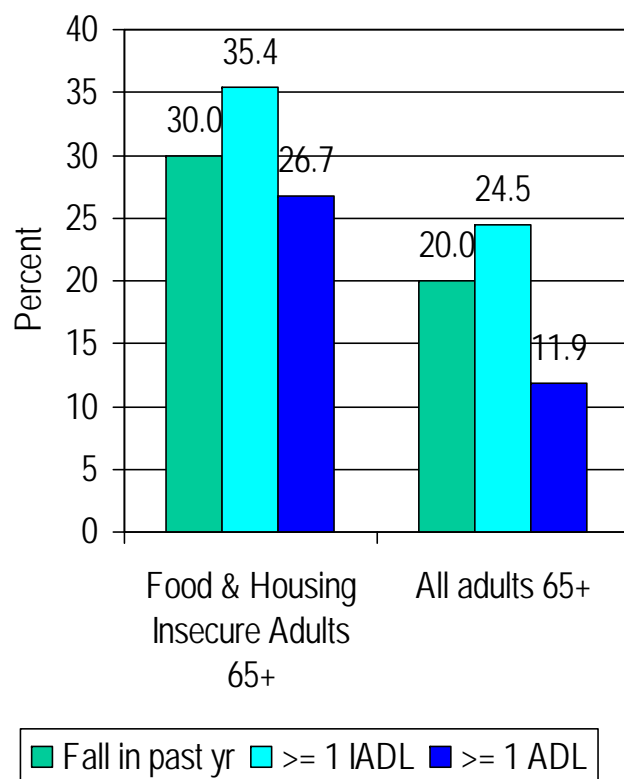
Access to Care for Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



- One-quarter of older adults with food and housing insecurity went without needed care (27.3%) or a prescription due to cost (26.6%) in the past year.

Source: PHMC Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, 2008 (n=81).

Functional Status of Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



- Older adults with food and housing insecurity are significantly more likely to have fallen in the past year (30.0% vs 20.0%) and to have one or more IADLs (35.4%) or ADLs (26.7%) than all older adults (24.5% and 11.9%, respectively)

Source: PHMC Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, 2008 (n=81).

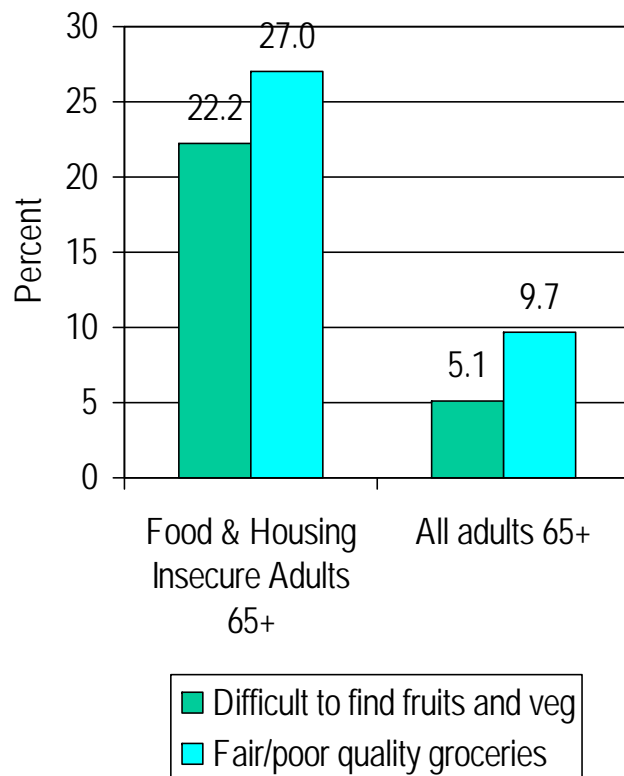


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Nutritional Status

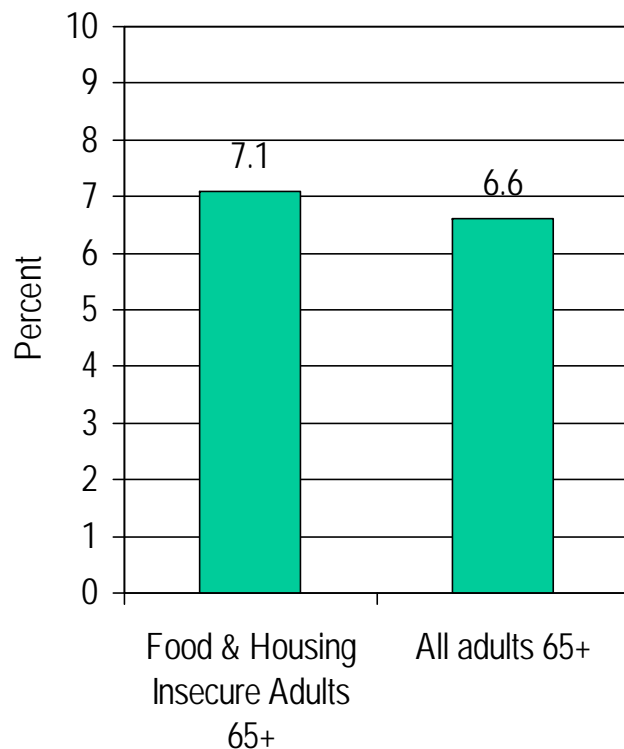
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Access to Fruits & Vegetables for Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



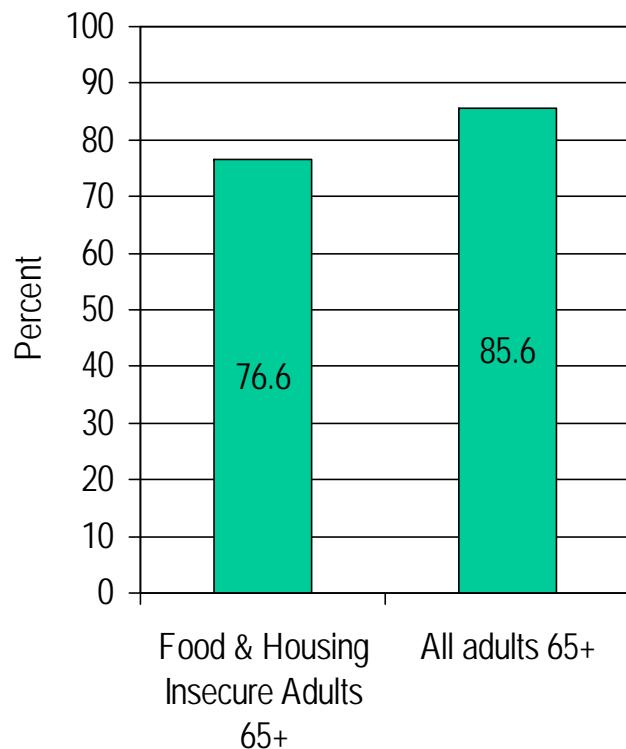
- About one in five food and housing insecure older adults (22.2%) find it difficult to get fresh fruits and vegetables and 27.0% report that the quality of groceries is fair or poor.

Use of Meal/Food Programs & Need for Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



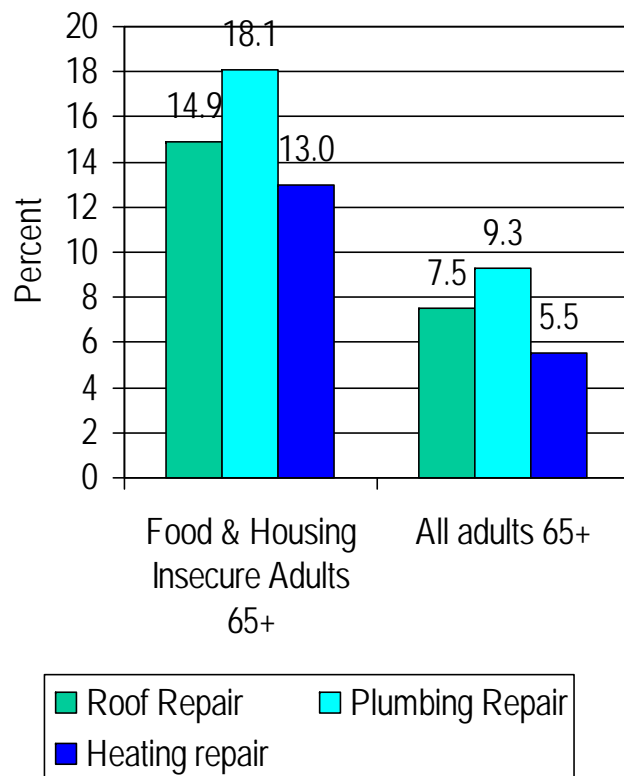
- Only 7.1% of food and housing insecure older adults use food or meal programs.
- This represents 1,300 older adults.
- Conversely, 92.9% of food and housing insecure older adults do not use food or meal programs.

Housing Status for Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



- Three-quarters of older adults with food and housing insecurity (76.6%) own their own homes compared to 85.6% of all adults 65+.

Housing Repair Needs for Food & Housing Insecure Older Adults and All Adults 65+



- More than one in eight older adults with food and housing insecurity need substantial repairs to their home.

Conclusion

- Older adults ages 65-74, African Americans, Latinos, and single adults are overrepresented in the population of older adults with food and housing insecurity.
- These older adults are in poor health but often go without needed care or medication due to cost.
- The percentage of food and housing insecure older adults who use food or meal programs is relatively low, although many find it difficult to find healthy food in their neighborhood.
- Many of these older adults who are finding it difficult to meet housing costs need substantial repairs to their homes.
- Older adults with food and housing insecurity have multiple problems which can be associated with poor health. Therefore, any nutrition programs should assess and address health and housing problems.

Notes

- ¹"Factors Associated with Food Insecurity Among U.S. Elderly Persons: Importance of Functional Impairments." Lee, J. and Frongillo, E., Jr. Journal of Gerontology. 56B(2): S94-S99. 2001
- ²"Household Food Insecurity is Associated with Adult Health Status." Stuff, J., Casey, P., Szeto, K., Gossett, J., Robbins, J., Simpson, P., Connell, C., and Bogle, M. Journal of Nutrition. 134: 2330-2335. 2004
- ³"Material Resources and Population Health: Disadvantages in Health Care, Housing, and Food Among Adults Over 50 Years of Age." Alley, D., Soldo, B., Pagan, J., McCabe, J., deBlois, M., Field, S., Asch, D., and Cannuscio, C. American Journal of Public Health. 99(S3): S693-S701. 2009